Met Office

October 2012

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

UK overview

The month brought a typical autumnal mix of showers and rain for much of the time, but with a couple of short settled spells. It was rather cool overall, with the first few widespread frosts of the season, and the north east experienced some significant snow accumulations towards the end of the month mainly across higher ground. There were a few days of heavy rainfall in certain areas, notably the 5th, 11th and 31st.

The UK mean temperature was 1.3 °C below the 1981-2010 average, and it was the coldest October since 2003; Northern Scotland had its 5th coldest October in a series since 1910. Rainfall and sunshine totals for the UK overall were close to their respective long-term averages. However, some eastern and southern counties were somewhat wetter than average, and it was a rather dull month across south-east England. In contrast, western Scotland was both drier and sunnier than normal.

A maximum temperature of 18.8 °C was recorded at Holbeach (Lincolnshire) on the 1st. A minimum temperature of -7.8 °C was recorded at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) early on the 17th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 on the 12th, 79.5 mm of rain fell at Belliston (Fife). A wind gust of 78 mph was recorded at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) during the 5th. A snow depth of 12 cm was observed at Copley (County Durham) on 27th.

Weather impacts

On 11th, an area of low pressure brought some intense downpours to parts of the south and west; flash flooding occurred in Clovelly (Devon) and flooding was also reported across parts of west Wales.

On 12th as the low pressure moved north it brought prolonged heavy rainfall to north-east Scotland with 50 to 70 mm recorded widely. There was flooding of roads and disruption to rail services across parts of Aberdeenshire, Angus and Fife, and the corner of one property in Fife was washed away by floodwaters.

On 18th, strong north-west winds combined with unusually high tides to cause some coastal flooding in Devon and Cornwall; a number of properties were flooded in Lynmouth, Mevagissey, Looe and Kingsbridge.

Widespread areas of fog across England and Wales affected transport on 22nd to 23rd.

Toward the end of the month wintry showers brought the first snowfalls, mainly across the high ground of north-east England, eastern and northern Scotland, accompanied by some icy conditions on roads.

England diary of highlights

October was a contrast of low pressure systems bringing fronts and periods of heavy rain interspersed with high pressure systems associated with mild, cloudy and rather damp conditions. Nights were often chilly with localised patches of frost and fog. Towards the end of the month a blast of arctic air reduced temperatures and provided the first significant snow accumulations of the year, mainly across high ground in parts of north-east England.

The mean temperature was 1.0 °C below the 1981-2010 average and it was the coldest October since 2003. Rainfall totals were a little above average overall, with more than 150% in some eastern and southern counties. Sunshine totals were below normal towards the south-east but above average in the north.

1st to 6th:

Low pressure brought fronts and periods of rain or showers, interspersed with transient quieter spells. Rain was heavy at times, notably on 4th to 6th. Daytime temperatures were above average, especially on 1st and 2nd when maximum temperatures exceeded 18 °C in the south and east; Holbeach (Lincolnshire) reached 18.8 °C on 1st. However, it was chilly at times overnight with local frost and fog at times. Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) recorded a gust of 78 mph on 5th.

7th to 10th:

High pressure became established, with mild, cloudy and damp conditions across the south and showery rain in counties bordering the English Channel; there were brighter in the north after any mist and fog cleared.

11th to 18th:

Low pressure moved in from the Atlantic, and an active front produced some torrential rain in the south and west on 11th. Winds increased, particularly along the English Channel. Showers, heaviest in the west, set in from 12th. There was also some overnight mist and fog, slow to clear in the mornings, and some places dipping close to freezing. On 16th to18th periods of rain alternated with showers and some strong winds.

19th to 24th:

A quieter spell of weather under a ridge of high pressure, but south-eastern parts in particular were cloudy and damp with rain or drizzle at times and hill fog. Although it was cold by night at first, milder conditions spread from the south-east through the period, and on 22nd temperatures reached 17 °C in places, with 18.6 °C at Bognor Regis (West Sussex).

25th to 27th:

Much colder arctic air gave a sharp contrast to recent weather as it sunk southwards. Heavy showers affected eastern coasts on 26th to 27th, falling as sleet, snow and hail, with accumulations of a few centimetres across north-east England, as much as 12 cm at Copley (County Durham), and just slight accumulations elsewhere. The showers persisted in the east on 27th but with time became less wintry; it was bright with plenty of sunshine elsewhere, but all areas were cold in a strong, gusty wind and temperatures struggled to reach double-figures Celsius.

28th to 31st:

Temperatures began a slow recovery from 28th as cloud and rain spread across the country, but it remained rather cold for the time of year as low pressure sat to the north of the UK. Periods of rain or showers then alternated with bright or sunny spells and patchy frost overnight. Later on 31st an active cold front moved east across the UK, bringing persistent rain with some heavy squally bursts. Strong winds developed, with coastal gales in the south.

Wales diary of highlights

October was a mixed month with unsettled periods of rain or showers interspersed with some fine, sunny days. It was rather cold at times. Heavy rain and gale force winds passed though on the 16th. but there were also some drier and clearer spells with occasional overnight frosts.

The mean temperature was 0.8 °C below the 1981-2010 average and it was the coldest October since 2003. Rainfall totals were mostly around or slightly below average. Sunshine totals were very close to normal.

1st to 7th:

The first few days were broadly unsettled with rain or showers and sunny intervals. After a mostly fine day on 1st, showers became heavy and thundery on 2nd, with gusty winds. The 3rd brought further showers and strong winds. After a brighter and drier period on 4th, heavy rain spread across Wales overnight associated with warm air from ex-hurricane Nadine. This rain cleared on 5th, then it was brighter and drier as a ridge of high pressure developed, which lasted until 7th. Early rain cleared on 6th to give a dry and bright day, followed by a chilly night with some mist and fog patches forming. The 7th was fine once the mist cleared, but cloud increased later from the south.

8th to 14th:

High pressure remained across northern UK, but frontal systems affected Wales, especially the south. On 8th, rain spread northwards and brisk easterly winds developed. There was rain in the south on 9th, but it remained drier and brighter in the north. Mainly light and patchy rain spread erratically northwards on 10th. Heavier rain developed and spread eastwards on 11th, with some flooding reported in west Wales. This rain slowly cleared overnight, and 12th was brighter with a few showers. Mist and fog formed in valleys overnight with a few showers in the west. On 13th, after the mist and fog cleared, a few heavy thundery showers developed. Clear spells overnight led to a frost, with -2.9 °C at Sennybridge (Powys). Some heavy showers were reported near coasts on 14th, but with sunny spells elsewhere.

15th to 18th:

After a cold night with patchy mist, fog and frost, showers developed on 15th, with some sunny spells too, although cloud increased later. The 16th began with a band of heavy rain and strong to severe gale force winds in the west; a gust of 69 mph was recorded at Aberdaron (Gwynedd), but winds eased and the rain cleared later. Further rain spread northwards overnight, clearing by morning, then 17th was windy with sunny spells and a few heavy thundery showers. Further showers on 18th were followed by a chilly, misty night.

19th to 25th:

The 19th was mostly dry with sunny spells. Early mist and fog cleared on 20th, then many places were fine under a ridge of high pressure, but a few showers fell in western and north-western parts. Some western areas enjoyed pleasant sunshine on 21st, with 16.6 °C at Pembrey Sands (Pembrokeshire), but overnight mist and fog were slow to clear in the English borders. The quieter spell continued, with initially some chilly nights, but becoming increasingly murky with extensive low cloud, hill fog and occasional drizzle.

26th to 31st:

Much colder and clearer weather spread from the north during 26th, and then 27th was generally dry, sunny and cold. After a cold night, with a minimum of -2.3 °C at Sennybridge, cloud and outbreaks of rain spread across the country on 28th. It was unsettled again to end the month, with some rain or showers but also brighter spells, and generally colder than the seasonal average. On 31st an active eastward-moving cold front brought strong winds for a time and also a period of heavy rain.

Scotland diary of highlights

Much of the month was rather unsettled with rain and showers. However, there were some settled spells around 5th to 10th and 21st to 25th. It was also rather cold at times, with several frosty nights and temperatures falling well below freezing, particularly in Highand Glens.

The mean temperature was 1.8 °C below the 1981-2010 average and it was the coldest October since 1993, ranking 7th coldest in a series since 1910. Rainfall totals were not far from average overall, though drier towards the north-west. Sunshine totals were mostly above normal, especially on the western side of the country.

1st to 10th:

A mix of sunshine and showers prevailed on 1st and 2nd; some of the showers were heavy, particularly in western areas, with a brisk westerly wind. The 3rd and 4th were similar, but by now the showers were more scattered and generally lighter. Later on 4th, however, a band of heavier showers spread from the west, clearing the east coast by dawn on 5th to leave another bright day, with scattered showers in the north. A similar day on 6th with a few showers for the far north but dry with sunshine elsewhere. During 7th to 10th much of the country remained fine, with sunny spells by day, temperatures reaching 15 °C in the south-west and borders, but still with a few showers in the far north.

11th to 19th:

Rain reached western areas in the morning of 11th, spreading eastwards during the day, some of it heavy especially in the south-east; Charterhall (Berwickshire) and Eskdalemuir (Dumfriesshire) both recorded 52.0 mm. On 12th, heavy rain again spread from the south, with the Aberdeen and Inverness areas seeing the heaviest falls. This rain cleared to the north overnight, and 13th was cloudy with some patchy light rain or drizzle for many central and western areas. The 14th and 15th brought sunshine and scattered showers, most of the showers in northern areas. A band of heavy rain for central and eastern areas on 16th cleared later in the afternoon. After a cold start in the north on 17th, with a minimum of -7.8 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire), much of the country had heavy rain, Leuchars (Fife) recording 27.4 mm. Sunshine and showers on 18th, brightest in the north with southern and central areas having most showers. The 19th was cloudy for most, with rain or drizzle for much of the north.

20th to 25th:

There was plenty of sunshine on 20th and 21st and only a few well scattered showers. Fog and drizzle affected eastern coasts at times during 22nd to 24th but the remainder of the country remained dry and bright. The 25th saw more sunshine for many areas.

26th to 31st:

It was much colder on 26th with frequent showers in northern areas, some falling as snow, which spread south-east overnight. After a bright start on 27th, rain reached the far north-west during the morning and reached most areas by dusk. The 28th again brought rain or showers for many areas. It was much brighter and less cold on 29th. The rain returned on 30th, mainly for the northern half, with scattered showers further south. The 31st saw a reversal with rain for the southern half and scattered showers in the north.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

The month began with a spell of relatively fine weather, becoming more unsettled from the 11th. Bands of rain and rather cool conditions were interspersed with some short spells of drier weather.

The mean temperature was 1.5 °C below the 1981-2010 average and it was the coldest October since 1993. Rainfall totals were very close to average. Sunshine totals were slightly above normal.

1st to 10th:

Sunshine and showers prevailed on 1st and 2nd, some of the showers quite heavy in a brisk westerly wind. The 3rd saw more showers but by now they were lighter and more scattered and it was less windy. After a bright start on 4th a band of showers, heavy in places, spread from the west. A bright day on 5th with only a few

scattered showers, and 6th was another fine bright day with showers restricted to northern coastal areas. All areas were fine from 7th to 9th, with temperatures reaching 15 °C in places. The 10th again started dry and sunny but showers developed in north-eastern coastal areas during the afternoon.

11th to 18th:

The settled spell ended on 11th as rain spread from the west, with eastern areas seeing as much as 25 mm. Sunshine and scattered showers on 12th and 13th, with the heaviest showers in northern coastal areas especially on the afternoon of 13th when the Belfast area recorded 17 mm. The 14th and 15th were quieter with bright spells and very few showers. In the early hours of 16th rain spread from the west, clearing by midday to leave a bright and dry afternoon. Another band of heavy rain spread from the south-west early on 17th before clearing away to leave some heavy showers for the afternoon; Castlereagh (County Down) recorded 46.1 mm. Another area of heavy rain spread from the west on 18th before clearing in the early afternoon to leave some heavy showers especially for northern areas, with Ballypatrick (County Antrim) recording 41.4 mm.

19th to 31st:

It was drier and brighter on 19th with only a few showers for eastern areas, and dry with sunny spells on 20th and 21st. There was more cloud from 22nd to 24th, but it remained generally dry apart from drizzle and low cloud in south-eastern coastal areas. It brightened up on 25th, with sunshine for many areas. Much colder air arrived by 26th on a northerly wind, with some light showers for north-facing coasts. Although 27th started dry, rain spread from the west later, which was slow to clear on 28th resulting in a wet day for many areas. An overnight clearance led to a much brighter and drier day on 29th with only a few light scattered showers. The 30th was dull with patchy rain. The morning of 31st saw rain spread from the west but this cleared in the afternoon to leave a brighter end to the day.

Last updated: 27 November 2013

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